

IN THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and listings.

1. (Currently amended) A cladding element for use in a cladding element assembly, the cladding element including:

a substantially flat web having a pair of opposed longitudinal edges;

a male rib formation extending at least partially along one longitudinal edge and having a pair of spaced apart inner and outer upstanding ribs and an engaging formation, the inner and outer upstanding ribs each being substantially perpendicular to the flat web; and

a female rib formation extending at least partially along the other longitudinal edge and having an inner upstanding rib, an outer depending rib and a joining section, between the inner and outer ribs and displaced from the plane of the web, and a corresponding engaging formation, at least one of the male or female rib formations being at least partially resiliently flexible, the inner upstanding rib and the outer depending rib each being substantially perpendicular to the flat web;

wherein the element is adapted for assembly with a like element by positioning of the male formation substantially within the female formation with their respective engaging formations in engagement, whereby the assembled male and female formations together form a substantially rectangular closed channel adapted for concealment of fixing means used to fix the cladding elements to a supporting structure and

wherein, when a major visible surface is formed on a side of the web remote from the male and female formations, the fixing means is positioned between the inner and outer ribs

of the male formation, and when the major visible surface is formed on a side of the web adjacent to the male and female formations, the fixing means is positioned in the joining section.

2. (canceled)

3. (canceled)

4. (previously presented) The cladding element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the engaging formation of the male rib formation is a flange angled inwardly and towards the web on the distal end of the inner male rib formation and the corresponding engaging formation of the female rib formation is a flange angled inwardly and away from the web on the distal end of the outer female rib formation.

5. (original) The cladding element as claimed in claim 4, wherein at least one of the inner male rib or the outer female rib are flexible to allow resilient flexing displacement as the angled flanges ride over one another during engagement.

6. (original) The cladding element as claimed in claim 5, wherein the male and female rib formations are both resiliently flexible.

7. (previously presented) The cladding element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the engaging formation of the male rib formation is an outwardly directed flange on the distal end of the outer male rib formation and the corresponding engaging formation of the female rib

formation is an outwardly directed recess on the distal end of the inner female rib formation.

8. (previously presented) The cladding element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the engaging formation of the male rib formation includes:

a flange angled inwardly and towards the web on the distal end of the inner male rib formation and the corresponding engaging formation of the female rib formation is a flange angled inwardly and away from the web on the distal end of the outer female rib formation; and

an outwardly directed flange on the distal end of the outer male rib formation and the corresponding engaging formation of the female rib formation is an outwardly directed recess on the distal end of the inner female rib formation.

9. (currently amended) The cladding element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the proximal end of the outer male rib formation includes an outwardly convex formation adapted to engage with an inwardly concave formation on the proximal end of the ~~outer male~~ inner upstanding rib of the female rib formation.

10. (previously presented) The cladding element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cladding element is formed from a single piece of roll formed steel.

11. (previously presented) The cladding element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the male rib formation is formed by folding some of the web back on itself.

12. (previously presented) The cladding element as claimed in claim 11, wherein a layer of adhesive is included between at least some of the web that is folded back on itself.

13. (previously presented) The cladding element as claimed in claim 12, wherein the layer of adhesive is an adhesive strip.

14. (previously presented) The cladding element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the layer of adhesive is a glue.

15. (previously presented) The cladding element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the web includes a plurality of longitudinal stiffening channels.

16. (original) The cladding element as claimed in claim 15, wherein the web includes two longitudinal stiffening channels.

17. (previously presented) The cladding element as claimed in claim 15, wherein the channels are convex towards the rib formations.

18. - 20. (canceled)